



# HEROIC DEEDS

## COMBAT ENHANCEMENT

**5TH EDITION**

Fight monsters and slay demons with as much creativity as you can muster  
in this rules supplement for the world's greatest roleplaying game

# HEROIC DEEDS COMBAT ENHANCEMENT

## A COMBAT RULES SUPPLEMENT

### BY SETH TOMLINSON

**C**OMBAT CAN BE A GRIND. WE'VE all been there. "How many times do I have to hit this creature before it dies?" Sometimes it feels like nothing more than a drawn-out exercise in dice-rolling. Sure you can try to throw in some creative moves and action description to make it more exciting, but what's the point really? A hit is a hit. A miss is a miss. Fanciful narration won't change the outcome.

That's enough of the bleak internal monologue. If we're being honest with ourselves we'll see that all games are just dressed math and probability. That's not why we play. We play because of the way they engage our imaginations, creativity and problem-solving skills. Combat is no exception. Combat *should* be fun.

However, I'm certain we've all played games where it becomes tiresome. And in those moments where we're worn out instead of excited, it isn't hard to slip into the negative thinking exemplified in my opening paragraph. Or perhaps your party simply needs an extra push to get the creative juices flowing. Whatever the situation, I've created a simple addition to the rules of *Dungeons & Dragons* combat designed to incentivize creativity and make fighting more fun.

## HEROIC DEEDS

This new system invites adventurers to proclaim their **Heroic Deed** before attempting any melee or ranged attack.

Instead of resigning oneself to a simple statement like:

*I attack the goblin with my short sword.*

a player can say what deed they're going to attempt, like:

*I swing my short sword up from my feet and cleave the filthy goblin between its legs*

or...

*I lunge at the goblin with my arm outstretched, short sword in hand and with great precision, pierce it through its right eye. When I land I pin its head to the floor.*

Big deal, right? A player could always try a move like that in *D&D*. Well, now that creative attack is incentivized by a **deed die roll**.

## GAMPLAY MECHANICS

If a player wants to perform a heroic deed, instead of taking their usual **attack bonus** for that attack, they will roll a deed die. The result of this roll will determine the success or failure of the heroic deed and will be added to the d20 roll, just like an attack bonus.

So there is risk to attempting a heroic deed, a player could end up with a much lower attack bonus than what they would have had with a *vanilla* attack.

The deed die to be used by the player is determined by whatever attack bonus the player would normally have on that attack. In order for the deed to be a success, the player must meet or beat the deed success number for that die.

A failed deed can still result in a hit, but at that point it's up to the Dungeon Master to determine how the deed failed and how it affected the target.

As an additional bonus, and incentive for using heroic deeds, a successful heroic deed will allow the player to roll a **bonus damage die**.

Appropriate deed and bonus damage dice can be determined by the **Heroic Deed Dice** table below.

### HEROIC DEED DICE

| ATTACK BONUS | DEED DIE | DEED SUCCESS | BONUS DAMAGE DIE |
|--------------|----------|--------------|------------------|
| 0-2          | d4       | 4            | d4               |
| 3-4          | d6       | 5 or higher  | d4               |
| 5-6          | d8       | 6 or higher  | d6               |
| 7            | d10      | 7 or higher  | d6               |
| 8            | d12      | 8 or higher  | d8               |
| 9 or higher  | d20      | 12 or higher | d10              |

These simple guidelines are the core rules of Heroic Deeds. For more options and tables, continue reading on the next page.



## OPTIONAL MECHANICS

If the Dungeon Master or the players are interested in adding more flavor to their combat, as well as more risks and rewards, this next section is a supplement to the core rules of Heroic Deeds.

The optional mechanics alter the bonus damage from a flat reward system seen in the **Heroic Deed Dice** table to a nuanced scale of rewards and handicaps.

If you choose to follow these optional mechanics, you must not follow **Bonus Damage Die** column of the **Heroic Deed Dice** table. Instead, follow the system of success and failure effects explained in this section.

Since there the effects of success and failures have been changed, the **Deed Success** target number has been changed to make the risk-reward ratio more fair. The amended Deed Dice table can be seen below.

### HEROIC DEED DICE (AMENDED)

| ATTACK BONUS | DEED DIE | DEED SUCCESS |
|--------------|----------|--------------|
| 0-2          | d4       | 3            |
| 3-4          | d6       | 4 or higher  |
| 5-6          | d8       | 5 or higher  |
| 7            | d10      | 6 or higher  |
| 8            | d12      | 7 or higher  |
| 9 or higher  | d20      | 10 or higher |

Rolls for deed success/failure effects need only be made if the attack is successful, since the deed itself depends on the attack landing.

## DEED INSPIRATION

A player's successful deed has the potential to inspire their allies. **Deed Inspiration** grants the ally (or allies) a bonus die to be added to any roll of their choice within that encounter. The Inspiration die will be determined by the **Deed Success** table.

In the same way, a failed deed can grant Deed Inspiration to the enemy. The enemies have just witnessed the player fumble on an attempted hit, and this causes them to gain confidence in battle against this clearly inadequate warrior. The Inspiration die for enemies will be determined by the **Deed Failure** table.

## DEED FAILURE

As explained in the core Heroic Deed rules, when a Heroic Deed is unsuccessful it will still hit if the attack roll was successful. But that hit may have some negative effects applied.

The table below will determine how a failed deed might weaken an attack and inspire the enemies.

A damage handicap works in the opposite way of a damage bonus. The Damage Handicap Die must be rolled and its result subtracted from the total damage of the hit.

DEED FAILURE TABLE

| d20 Effect                                                                                           | Damage Handicap Die | Enemy Inspiration Die |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 You deal much less damage and every enemy that could see your failed deed is inspired.             | d10                 | d6                    |
| 2-3 You deal less damage and every enemy that could see your failed deed is inspired.                | d6                  | d6                    |
| 4-5 You deal less damage and the nearest enemy that could see your failed deed is inspired.          | d6                  | d4                    |
| 6-7 You deal slightly less damage and every enemy that could see your failed deed is inspired.       | d4                  | d4                    |
| 8-9 You deal slightly less damage and the nearest enemy that could see your failed deed is inspired. | d4                  | —                     |
| 10-13 You deal slightly less damage.                                                                 | d4                  | —                     |
| 14-20 You deed fails, but the enemy takes full damage from your hit.                                 | —                   | —                     |



## DEED SUCCESS

A successful deed has the potential to deal bonus damage and inspire allies. There is even a rare chance for an instant kill. The reason for this is that even the strongest warrior is no match for an arrow through their skull or a sliced jugular. A perfectly accomplished heroic deed can kill.

Not all Dungeon Masters or players will want to have an instant kill option in their game, so as always, be creative and change whatever rules you don't like.

The table below will determine how a successful deed might improve an attack and inspire allies.



DEED SUCCESS TABLE

| d20 Effect                                                                                                         | Bonus<br>Damage<br>Die | Inspiration<br>Die |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 No bonus damage or extra effects, but you look really cool performing your deed.                                 | —                      | —                  |
| 2-3 You deal a small amount of bonus damage.                                                                       | d4                     | —                  |
| 4-5 You deal a small amount of bonus damage and inspire the nearest ally that could see the deed.                  | d4                     | d4                 |
| 6-7 You deal a small amount of bonus damage and inspire every ally that could see the deed. performed.             | d4                     | d4                 |
| 8-9 You deal a moderate amount of bonus damage.                                                                    | d6                     | —                  |
| 10-11 You deal a moderate amount of bonus damage and inspire the nearest ally that could see the deed.             | d6                     | d4                 |
| 12-13 You deal a moderate amount of bonus damage and inspire every ally that could see the deed. performed.        | d6                     | d4                 |
| 14-15 You deal a moderate amount of bonus damage and inspire every ally that could see the deed. performed.        | d8                     | d4                 |
| 16-17 You deal a large amount of bonus damage and inspire every ally that could see the deed. performed.           | d10                    | d6                 |
| 18-19 You deal a large amount of bonus damage and inspire every ally that could see the deed. performed.           | d12                    | d6                 |
| 20 You instantly kill your enemy with your powerful attack and greatly inspire every ally that could see the deed. | Instant Kill           | d8                 |

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